

The TACO Times
Third Avenue Charitable
Organization, Inc.
First Lutheran Church
1420 Third Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101-3193

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First Lutheran Church
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www.tacosd.org

This Month in the TACO Times:

- A recap of our 2009 Sun-
set by the Sea fundraiser,
which raised over \$22,000
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- Pictures from Sunset by the
Sea (page 3)
- A statement from our
board of directors on
health care reform (page
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- More creative ways to
support TACO (page 2)
- An enchanting evening of
culinary delight—learn
how to reserve your spot
(page 3)
- Info on upcoming
events—including our
volunteer appreciation
party, wrapping for
Christmas in July, and
Eleos volunteer training
(page 6)

“A place where healing of body, mind and spirit can happen for any and all who come.”

Upcoming Events at TACO!

Sleeping Bag Wrapping Party Wednesday, December 9, 9:00 AM

Volunteers are needed in the lounge of First Lutheran Church to wrap the sleeping bags for our annual Christmas in July Fundraiser. We'll start at 9:00 AM and go until all the bags are wrapped!

Volunteer Appreciation Christmas Party December 12, Noon

To show our appreciation for the hard work of our volunteers there will be a party in the lounge of First Lutheran Church. Please bring a dish to share—it could be a main dish, a side dish, or a dessert. Bring your favorite! RSVP to Rachel at 619-235-9445 ext. 2 so we know you're coming.

TACO's Eleos Volunteer Training Saturday February 27th

Whether you are fairly new to TACO or a long term volunteer, we believe Eleos is geared to both. TACO Staff and Board members have participated and come away with a greater understanding of themselves and the service they give. Volunteers who are interested in the Simon's Walk ministry will also attend this training retreat as the initial portion of their training. For more details, contact Jim Lovell (contact info to the right).

The TACO Times

Vol. 6 No. 5

First Lutheran Church
Third Ave. Charitable Org. Inc.
1420 Third Ave.
San Diego, Ca. 92101-3193

Return Service Requested

Join us

- Preparing and serving meals
- Set-up and cleanup
- Driving, shopping and picking up food
- Gathering other supplies and donations

Sponsor us

- Urge your company or corporation to contribute
- Organize your church or youth group
- Make an individual financial contribution

Support us

- With your prayers and voice of advocacy for the people we serve

Contact us

Jim Lovell

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TACO: Arms Outstretched

Members of **Arms Outstretched** are asked to contribute at least \$1 a day or \$365 a year to the work and ministry of TACO. A dollar a day is the amount of money that poor people throughout the world live on.

The following are **Arms Outstretched** members:

Pastor Andrew Taylor
Betty and Joseph Corsi
Pastor Brian Hooper
Carol Harris
Anonymous
David and Carolyn Clark
David and Lois Case
Dianna Little
Donald Ebinger
Elaine Lauger
Eve Mezey
Geraldine Jenkins
Helen Wilson
Jeannie Oestreicher
Joanne and Rick Talazus
John and Katherine Adler
John and Donna Adler
Kathleen Harrington
Kevin Gannon
Kim Naour
Pastor Laurie Line
Laverne Neuman
Mary Erlenborn
Melanie Novak
Paul Engel
Rebecca and John Foley
Steven and Carol Hassett
Ted and Marietta Johns

The benefit of membership is knowing that you are working for the on-going stability of TACO and will be invited to special events. Those who wish will be listed as **Arms Outstretched** members in *The Taco Times*.

Please consider joining **Arms Outstretched**. Help us care for God's blessed poor every day of the year.

The TACO Times

Celebrating 35 Years of Bread Day

Volume 6, Issue 5

November 2009

When It All Turns Upside Down by Jim Lovell

It is an amazing blessing to be with you all at the ending of 2009. This year it has a more powerful feeling than in previous years. I am sure that it is because I did not think that I would be here to write to you all at this time. I should explain. At this time last year, The TACO board and I met to talk about a seemingly insurmountable problem, we had completed our existing grant funding and had no strong prospects for 2009. In the previous 7 years during which TACO had paid staff, we had relied on grant funding to pay for our employees. As we looked to budget for 2009, we realized that we had a potential \$105,000 hole which we had worked all year to fill from grants. It was a frightening prospect. In my 6 years working for TACO, this was the third time that we would enter the new year with no clear idea as to how we

would fund any of our staff through the coming year. On the previous two times this had occurred, I had some reassurance either that there were grant prospects to cover this issue or our partner clinics indicated offering some support. This year, there were no grant prospects and the free clinics program also found themselves with major cutbacks and layoffs imminent.

I will put it another way. In the previous 7 years, grant funding made up 80% of the funding of TACO's operating expenses, and donations from caring donors made up the other 20%. Going into 2009, we would have to look at the possibility that we would not be able to afford staff of any kind. This was a daunting period for myself and Nance, the TACO staff, the TACO board and for



Guests at Sunset by the Sea

First Lutheran Church and Pastor Miller. We really wondered where we were headed and what plans we needed to make.

The TACO board made an historic decision then, the decision to let our donors know that we were broken. That though we continued to provide great and valuable

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Sunset by the Sea Raises over \$22,000

The Third Avenue Charitable Organization's annual fundraiser Sunset by the Sea last month raised more than \$22,000 this year. That last bit is worth repeating.

This year.

The amount is the most-ever raised for this event, now in its fourth year as TACO's biggest annual fundraiser. The exact grand total of \$ 22,130 was truly amazing, coming in as it did in one of the most difficult economic climates in decades.

"Honestly, I was nervous about

this year," TACO board secretary Melanie Novak said. "We've always done so much with so little, but this year has been so challenging. We are truly grateful for the hard work and generosity of everyone who made this possible."

Sunset by the Sea was held Oct. 10 at the beautiful La Jolla home of Drs. Rup and Vani Nagala, friends and supporters of TACO. An autumn harvest supper catered by Lisa Rosa-Retamoza of Dinner a-Go-Go was served beside the pool. Guests mingled on patios overlooking the ocean as the after-

noon faded toward a beautiful sunset.

As a special event, Dr. Ellen Beck, creator of the student-run free clinics of UCSD Medical School, was honored for her work.

More than 30 artfully and exquisitely wrapped baskets and other items were displayed throughout the home in a silent auction, which included everything from a wine lover's basket to a gondola ride in Coronado, to global gifts, golf and family fun. And a crowd of over 100 bid on items that included

Continued on page 2

Sunset by the Sea *continued from page 1*

restaurant gift certificates, museum, art and theater passes, fine jewelry, art and much more.

The live auction featured original art from more than a dozen participating artists, autographed baseballs and trips to the Bahamas and a cottage on the Oregon coast.

A wine tasting event from PRP Wines International was held in the study, and everyone's favorite – a chocolate fountain hosted by Alpine Chocolate Fountains was drawing oohs and aaahs in the kitchen.

More than a dozen students from local colleges and universities gave up their Saturday night to pass hors d'oeuvres and man the buffet tables, and more

than a dozen friends of TACO (and TACO board members) volunteered behind the scenes to make sure everything from the greeting table to the checkout process was running smoothly.

Many thanks to so many without whom this event would not be possible: Nance Lovell for organizing the artwork for the live auctions AND organizing the basket wrapping artistry; Francie Montgomery for "womaning" the Sunset table at First Lutheran to plan and gather and wrap basket items; Peg Ross and Dianna Little, the unstoppable forces of the donations team; Rachel Line for unparalleled skills in volunteer wrangling and sponsorship procurement; Stephanie Alexander for her flower arrangements, Jim Lovell and Joe Slevcove for emceeding a fine program and entertaining live auction; the Doctors

Nagala for the donation of their home and Jo Koch and Deb Hoistad for making sure it all worked well; the more than 80 individuals, groups, and organizations that donated items and services for the live and silent auctions; and the entire TACO Board of Directors for their financial support and volunteer work before, during and afterwards.

All of the proceeds from this event will go directly to supporting TACO's programs and services, which are operating at and beyond capacity. The funds will help our guests most directly and have worked wonders to raise the spirits of our volunteers and staff.

All Saints Sunday *by Bill Radatz*

November 1. All Saints Sunday. I've just come from the 8th annual vigil for homeless persons that have died on the streets of San Diego. 50 this year! One was a 10-month-old child. Over 600 had died in the eight years that the vigil has been kept. Most remain unknown and "invisible".

TACO is driven by folks like you who believe this should not be. We believe that basic elements of life, like

food and shelter and health care, are gifts from God intended for everyone, and that every person is valued in God's eyes. The gift of the time you share with TACO, or the financial support you give, is not only an affirmation of what we believe about God, it is a statement that says to folks who find themselves in hard situations in life that they are not invisible and are not forgotten – even in their dying.

Thanks! You're a saint!



Creative Ideas for Supporting TACO - You Could... *by Jim Lovell*

- Donate your vacation place for our Live Auction as Jennifer Young and Suzanne and John Pew did at Sunset by the Sea.
- Contact Panera Bread to receive their excess bread once a week like St. Luke's does.
- Help TACO become a line-item in your church's budget, guarenteeing a regular monthly gift like the following churches: Shepherd of the Valley, St. Timothy's, St. Lukes, Calvary Solana Beach, & Clairemont Lutheran.
- Return to tell us how this all began and to serve again as Betty (Meyers) Corsi has done (35th year in business!)
- Run a half-triathlon (running, swimming, and biking) and donate the money raised like Julie Morton did.
- Wash down our tables, our chairs, clean our cupboards, our clothing shelves, our food storage, and pack hygiene kits like the inaugural class at King/Chavez High School!!
- Donate 200+ Socks like Jim Seiler did to be given out on a Friday morning around Christmas, that each person through the meal line, might have warm, clean, and dry feet
- Include TACO in your church's Foundation giving as St. Andrews, Calvary Solana Beach, and other churches have done
- Bring cans of Coffee (one of our greater expenses) for our meals like Bob McKenzie does.
- See our next issue for more creative ways to support TACO!

A Matter of Health

A Call by the Board of Directors of the Third Avenue Charitable Organization (TACO) for urgent health care reform, delivered to our senators and congressional representatives.

We are the Board of Directors of the Third Avenue Charitable Organization (TACO), a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization in San Diego. Our business is the health and well-being of low-income and homeless persons in San Diego – most of whom have no other options for or access to health care, or have found the present system so overwhelming they have given up trying. We provide nutritional meals, and medical and dental care in free clinics held here at First Lutheran Church through a partnership with the University of California School of Medicine and the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine.

Unfortunately, our business is booming. We have seen an increase this year of some 30% in persons coming for our services. Our clinics must now regularly turn new patients away, and are not even able to see all of their existing patients.

Access to good health care for our clients, and for the estimated 45 million-plus persons in the U.S. without health coverage, should NOT depend on the goodwill and donated time of medical personnel, nor put individuals in the position of begging outside of the walls of our medical system.

In the wealthiest country with the most advanced medical technology in the world, it is an outrage that neither the will nor the mechanism exists to provide adequate basic health care for all our people. We join our voices with these persons who do not have options for health care, and say change MUST BE MADE which gives access for ALL people.

We ask for your leadership in putting us out of business. Please come back to us a year from now and tell us that our medical services are no longer needed because the people we serve now have access within the system for the care they need. Help to create a health care standard in which the poor have their health valued as much as those who create and regulate the system.

Board of Directors, Third Avenue Charitable Organization
William Radatz, Chair

Volunteer Report *by Rachel Line*

It's hard to believe that 2009 is coming to a close. But in this home stretch of 2009, there are still big things happening! Christmas in July has been a huge success! We now have enough money to distribute 250 sleeping bags to our guests at Christmas. Volunteers are needed in the lounge of First Lutheran Church on **Wednesday, December 9** to wrap the sleeping bags. We'll start at 9:00 a.m. and go until all the bags are wrapped! To thank you for all your work throughout this year, TACO will be having a Volunteer Appreciation Christmas Party on **December 12, at noon**. Please bring a dish to share. It could be a main dish, a side dish, or a dessert. Bring your favorite! **RSVP to Rachel at 619-235-9445, ext. 2 so we know you're coming!**

These past few months, we've had a great variety of groups. We've had groups from several Lutheran Churches, a group from the pharmaceutical company Vertex, another group from the

software company Intuit, and several Girl Scout and Brownie troops. We continue to see a mix of long-time volunteers and first time volunteers. All of these volunteers find it to be important to give back to their community in whatever way they can. We're so lucky to have the support of such a variety of people. We're also very lucky to have received over \$500.00 from Julie Morton who completed a half-triathlon, giving the money raised to TACO. Julie and her son, Finn, have been volunteering on Friday mornings since July.

Recently, I've been reading from a book called "Crazy Talk: A Not-So-Stuffy Dictionary of Theological Terms," edited by Rolf A. Jacobson. It has wonderful definitions of words that we hear a lot in the church. Here is the definition of *Service* according to this book: "Service: In electricity, service means that something is supplied, connected. In economics, service is a nonmaterial good that can be exchanged for money or for another

service. In lips, service is what you said to your mom that got you your mouth washed out with soap. In theology, service is what you do for others because of what God has done for you. It is not required for salvation. It's one way we respond to God's love. Service calls us beyond ourselves to recognize and actually do something to meet the needs of another." God's love for us is so great, that our response is to strive to love others as we are loved. The volunteers who help serve our meals are responding to God's love by giving of themselves. Thank you for responding by sharing your time at TACO and by keeping TACO in your prayers.